(b) Whether it is also a fact that Government have not sanctioned any grant for this State for operating these centres for the last five years, whereas 100 percent fund is due to be given by Government;

(c) Whether a proposal of the State Government for Rs. 141.36 lakhs is pending with Government for approval and if so, by when the said amount would be sanctioned; and

(d) Whether Government would sanction the amount of Rs. 276.36 lakh as desired by the State Government by including that for this financial year also?

THE MINISTER OF TRIBAL AFFAIRS (SHRI P.R. KYNDIAH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Ministry of Tribal Affairs has sanctioned an amount of Rs. 57 lakhs in the year 2005-06 towards the expenditure incurred on the 10 Vocational Training Centres (VTCs) to the State Govt. of Madhya Pradesh.

(c) The State Govt. has now claimed an amount of Rs. 141.36 lakhs as the expenditure incurred on the 10 VTCs upto the year 2004-05. Against the claim of the State Govt. an amount of Rs. 57 lakhs has been released in 2005-06, and another Rs. 57 lakhs in 2006-07.

(d) All proposals for grants-in-aid for Vocational Training Centres are considered on the basis of availability of funds, verification of Utilization Certificates (UCs) and other procedures.

NCAER Study on economic backwardness of Muslims

*295. SHRI S.P.M. SYED KHAN: Will the Minister of MINORITY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the study of the National Council for Applied Economic Research has revealed that Muslims leg behind when compared to the other minority groups in terms of household and per capita income;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken/achievements made by Government to remove disparity in the socio-economic status of Muslims compared to the other minority groups?

THE MINISTER OF MINORITY AFFAIRS (SHRI A. R. ANTULAY): (a) and (b) As per the study of National Council for Applied Economic

Research (NCAER) based on sample survey conducted in 1994, the per capita income of Muslims was Rs. 3678 as compared to Rs. 5920 of Christians and Rs. 5427 of other minorities. Likewise, household income of Muslims was Rs. 22807 as compared to Rs. 28860 of Christians and Rs. 30330 of other minorities.

(c) Government has recently announced the Prime Minister's New 15 Point Programme for the Welfare of Minorities which provides for— enhancing opportunities for education, equitable share in economic activities and employment; improving the conditions of living of the minorities; and wherever possible, earmarking of 15%of targets and outlays under various schemes for minorities. The new programme also continues to emphasise on maintenance of communal peace and harmony, and ensuring a reasonable representation of minorities in government, including the public sector. Through the National Minorities Development & Finance Corporation (NMDFC), soft loans for economic activities and education to weaker sections among the minorities are provided and the authorized share capital of NMDFC has been raised from Rs. 500 crores to Rs. 650 crores to expand its coverage. Schemes for eudcational development of minorities are implemented by Maulana Azad Education Foundation (MAEF).

Other measures taken by the Government to address the concerns of the minorities include—

* Constituting a High Level Committee under the Chairmanship of Justice Sachar to prepare a report on the social, economic and educational status of the Muslim community of India. The committee is expected to submit its report by 31st October, 2006;
* Constituting the National Commission for Religious and Linguistic Minorities (NCRLM) to *inter-alia* recommend measures for welfare of socially and economically backward sections among religious and linguistic minorities, including reservation in education and government employment. The report is expected by 31st October, 2006.
* Introducing the 103rd Constitution Amendment Bill, 2004 in the Lok Sabha to confer constitutional status on the National Commission for Minorities.